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American Board of Commissioners for  
Foreign Missions

# MICRONESIAN MISSION

A CONDENSED SKETCH

1852 - 1907

BOSTON

Printed for the American Board

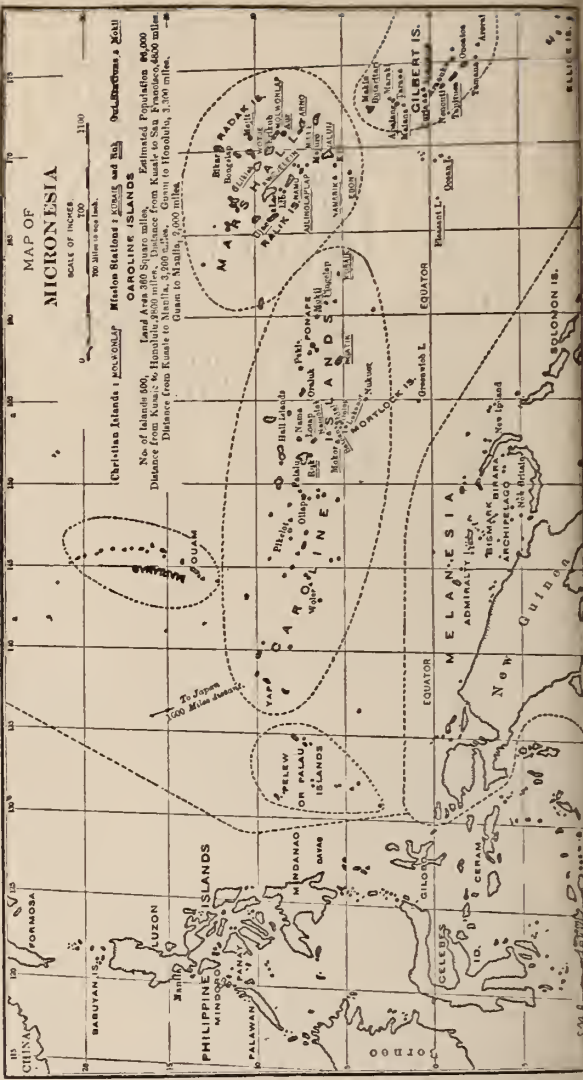
CONGREGATIONAL HOUSE

1907

# MAP OF MICRONESIA

SCALE OF INCHES  
0 100 200  
700 Miles to one Inch.

**Christian Islands: MARIANAS**    **Micron Stations: KAROLINE and MALDEN**    **Other Stations: NICKELI**  
**CAROLINE ISLANDS**  
 No. of Islands 900,    Land Area 360 Square miles,    Estimated Population 84,000  
 Distance from Kusaie to Honolulu 2,600 miles,    Distance from Kusaie to San Francisco 4,600 miles  
 Distance from Kusaie to Manila, 3,200 miles,    Govern to Honolulu, 3,300 miles.  
 Guam to Manila, 2,000 miles.



CHINA

BABUYAN IS.

LUZON

PHILIPPINE ISLANDS

MINDANAO

DAVAO

OTERO

CELEBES

GILOBO

CERAM

EQUATOR

MELANESIA

ADMIRALTY ISLANDS

BIG MARK BIRAK

ARCHIPELAGO

NEW IRELAND

NEW BRITAIN

NEW GUINEA

SOLONON IS.

EQUATOR

MORTLOCK IS.

PHOENIX IS.

PHOENIX IS.

MARSHALL IS.

MARIANAS

GUAM

TO JAPAN  
1000 Miles distance

GILBERT IS.

GILBERT IS.

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## MICRONESIAN MISSION.

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LOCATION.—Micronesia, meaning “Little Islands,” embraces four principal groups with about one thousand islands, lying mostly just north of the equator, between longitude  $106^{\circ}$  and  $145^{\circ}$  west from Washington; five thousand miles southwest from San Francisco; from Honolulu, twenty-five hundred miles. The groups, beginning with the most eastern and southern, are the Gilbert, Marshall, Caroline, and Mariana Islands. Missions of the American Board are scattered over an area measuring twenty-five hundred miles from east to west, and some twelve hundred miles from north to south. Nauru, or Pleasant Island, though distant from the Marshalls is connected with them, and has become prominent of late because of the great deposits of phosphate found there. The Mortlock Islands, a small group within the Caroline, with Ruk and several other islands, constitute the foreign missionary field of the Ponape Christians. The Hawaiian Evangelical Association has co-operated with the Board in work in the Gilbert and Marshall Islands.

CHARACTER OF THE ISLANDS.—Except a few in the Caroline group, all are of coral formation. They consist of a belt of coral reef rising to low water mark and enclosing a lagoon, into which usually one or more passages lead from the open sea. Upon this reef are islets formed of coral, sand and rocks, washed up by the waves, rising from four to ten feet above high-water mark, the tide flowing about three feet. These islets are covered thickly with trees, and can be seen ten or fifteen miles at sea. The lagoons which have channels are good harbors, but are often inaccessible to sailing vessels during the trade winds.

Kusaie and Ponape, of the Caroline group, are of basaltic formation, and have mountains from two to three thousand feet high. Ruk, Pelew, and Yap are also high islands.

CLIMATE AND PRODUCTS.—Perpetual summer reigns. The thermometer ranges from 72° to 90° Fahrenheit; at Ponape, from 74° to 87°; at Apaiang, from 80° to 90°. Coral islands are not ordinarily fertile. Three principal products support human life: (1) The cocoanut-palm, growing wild on all the islands. It has branches only at the top, and is often eighty feet high. (2) The bread-fruit tree, a beautiful tree growing on all groups except the Gilbert. Its general appearance is not unlike the oak. A foreigner, who has this fruit properly cooked, finds it

nutritious and a good substitute for potatoes. (3) The pandanus-tree, or screw-pine, bearing a large bunch of juicy fruit. Besides these fruit-trees, taro, an edible root, is grown. On the high islands, especially Kusaie and Ponape, there is a much larger range of products, including more than a dozen kinds of bananas. Various tropical fruits are now introduced.

Fish are taken in abundance. There were no animals on the coral islands, but many sea-birds. Pigs and chickens have been introduced. The hills of Kusaie and Ponape are covered with forest trees, where plenty of wild pigs and pigeons are found.

POPULATION.—The inhabitants are of the brown Polynesian race, having straight hair. As no census has ever been taken, estimates of the population vary greatly. The Gilbert Islanders were said, a few years ago, to number about thirty thousand: there are now thought to be not far from twenty thousand. The Marshall Islanders have been estimated at fourteen thousand. Ponape has a population of about five thousand; the Mortlocks and Ruk about fourteen thousand; Mokil and Pingelap about twelve hundred and fifty; Yap about eight or ten thousand.

GOVERNMENT.—When the Mission began, in 1852, the islands were free from the dominance of foreign rulers, but now Germany

owns the Carolines and the Marshalls, Great Britain the Gilberts, and the United States holds Guam on the Marianas. Spain which formerly claimed all the groups has retired.

**HOMES AND HABITS OF THE PEOPLE.**—In the Gilbert and Marshall Islands the houses have no sides for about four feet from the ground, with a closed attic and a thatched roof. In the Caroline Islands the houses have sides covered with light wood or reeds. The people sleep in these attics, or, in dry weather, on the ground, with a wooden pillow and a mat covering. Before the gospel came to them, the men in the Gilbert Islands went nearly or quite naked; the women wearing a little fringed skirt. In the Marshall Islands the women wore two mats belted at their waists, and the men had a fringed skirt. The Caroline Islanders, as a general thing, were not so well clad as the Marshall Islanders. Both men and women were elaborately tattooed; but this heathenish custom is rapidly passing away. There was no marriage rite known; but the pairing of men and women was respected. They seemed to care for their children, but had less regard for old people. The men spent their time in fishing, in canoe-building, and in getting food for their chiefs. The women were employed in twisting cord, to take the place of nails and pegs, and in making mats and sails for proas. The people were greatly addicted to war, and

their feuds have resulted in a great decrease in the population of many of the islands. Each of the main groups has its own language, while in the Caroline group there are six or eight distinct languages.

RELIGIOUS IDEAS.—Spirits of ancestors and other spirits were worshiped, but no idols. The people were very superstitious, but had no conception of a Supreme God, and no idea of sacrifice. Certain places, regarded as the resorts of spirits, were not crossed. Some islands had priests, who, in times of sickness, and on special occasions, practiced their incantations, pretending to converse with the dead.

THE MISSION OF THE AMERICAN BOARD.—In 1852, three missionaries, Messrs. Snow, Gulick, and Sturges, with their wives, and two Hawaiian teachers, settled on Kusaie and Ponape, receiving a welcome from the unclad and wild people. In 1855, Mr. and Mrs. Doane sailed from Honolulu for Ponape, followed the same year by Dr. and Mrs. Pierson, who remained at Kusaie with Mr. Snow. On their way they explored many of the Gilbert and Marshall Islands, and advised that they be occupied. The next year, the first *Morning Star* sailed from Boston, carrying Mr. and Mrs. Bingham, who, in November, 1857, reached Apaiang, of the Gilbert group, and on the same voyage of the *Star* Messrs. Pierson and Doane, with

their wives, were stationed at Ebon, one of the Marshall Islands. Thus, in 1857, the three groups were opened for Christian work.

The Marshall Islanders were known as treacherous, and many warnings were given the missionaries against landing among them; but the way was wonderfully prepared for their coming. The languages of the several groups were studied and reduced to writing, and after six years two persons were received to the church at Kusaie. In nine years there were thirty converts on that island, and Mr. Snow was then transferred to Ebon. On Ponape, it was eight years before the first natives were received to the church; but by 1867 there were one hundred and sixty-three members, and one thousand persons who could read. In 1860, Dr. and Mrs. Pierson were compelled, by ill-health, to withdraw from the mission; and, for a similar reason, two years later, Dr. and Mrs. Gulick withdrew. In 1865, Mr. Bingham, too, was forced to return to the United States, leaving the work on Apaiang in charge of the Hawaiian teacher. In November of 1866 he sailed from Boston in command of the new *Morning Star*, built by the contributions of the children. In 1868, fifteen years from the beginning, there were five hundred and forty-five church members in all the mission, one hundred and forty-four having been added during the previous year. In 1871, Mr. and Mrs. Whitney joined the mis-



sion, followed, in 1874, by Messrs. Logan, Taylor, and Rand, with their wives,—Mrs. Taylor dying only a few weeks after arriving at Apaiang. The statistics of 1873 report nine hundred and twenty-eight members, with one hundred and eighty-nine additions. In 1875, there were, on various islands, about twenty churches, with an aggregate membership of not far from twelve hundred. The New Testament, or a portion of it, had been translated into four dialects, and two and a half million pages had been printed.

Year by year new islands were visited and supplied with teachers. Pingelap and Mokil were entered in 1871; the Mortlocks, in 1874; Ruk. in 1879. The Mortlocks, included among the Caroline Islands, were chosen as the foreign missionary field of the Ponape Christians, and they have supplied the necessary teachers. In 1875 Mr. Bingham's health was so seriously impaired that he removed to Honolulu, where he has since devoted his strength and labors in behalf of the Gilbert Islanders, completing his translation of the Scriptures into their language in 1890, and since then laboring upon a Biblical Commentary for them. In 1877 Dr. and Mrs. Pease joined the mission, while Mr. Taylor and Mr. and Mrs. Snow returned to the United States. The report of 1878 gives fourteen hundred and ninety-eight church members, with three hundred and fifty-eight additions. In that year the *Star*

visited twenty-six different islands. In 1880 Mr. Taylor rejoined the mission at the Gilbert Islands, but, on account of the death of his wife, a sister of the first Mrs. Taylor, was compelled again to withdraw. In the same year, Mr. and Mrs. Walkup joined the mission, followed, in 1881, by Miss Cathcart, and, in 1882, by Miss Fletcher. Two years later Miss Palmer went out for Ponape, and in 1886 Misses Crosby, Hemingway, and Smith reached Kusaie, to be connected with the schools for the Marshall and Gilbert Islands. Miss Hemingway returned the next year. Mr. and Mrs. Logan had taken up their residence on Ruk in 1884, thus securing a near point for the supervision of the churches on the Mortlock group. But in December of 1887 the mission suffered an irreparable loss in the death of Mr. Logan, and the temporary withdrawal of Mrs. Logan from the field.

During the year 1890 the mission was reinforced by Mr. and Mrs. Channon and Miss Hoppin at Kusaie, Miss Kinney at Ruk, and Miss Foss at Ponape. In May of the same year the veteran missionary, Mr. Doane, returned invalided to Honolulu, where he died. During this year came the culmination of a series of outrages perpetrated by the Spanish government, which resulted in the expulsion of all American missionaries from the island of Ponape.

In 1887 the Spaniards, who claimed the

sovereignty of the Caroline Islands, sent a governor with troops and six Capuchin priests to take possession of that island, promising not to interfere with missionary work already begun. The presence of the soldiers tended strongly to the demoralization of the natives, and the Spaniards began to seize some of the mission property and trample on the rights of the natives. Mr. Doane was arrested and taken to Manila for trial on absurd charges. In the meantime the natives rose against the Spaniards, killing many of them and maintaining their ground. The Spanish governor at Manila dismissed the charges against Mr. Doane and he was returned to Ponape.

The story of subsequent events is too long for this sketch. One encroachment upon the natives followed another till, exasperated by the wrongs which they had suffered, they rose against their oppressors, slaughtering many of them. The missionaries who had tried to maintain peace were banished, and the mission houses were destroyed in the subsequent battles between the natives and the invaders.

In 1891 Mr. and Mrs. Rand and Miss Foss, who were of the number driven from Ponape, were located on the adjacent island of Mokil. In 1892 Miss Abell went to Ruk, followed the next year by Miss Wilson, when Miss Little and Miss Fletcher came to the United States, not to return. Miss Kinney

was obliged to retire from service in 1897.

In 1894, on the return of Dr. and Mrs. Pease to the United States, Dr. and Mrs. Rife took their places in connection with the Marshall Islands school on Kusaie, and Rev. and Mrs. F. M. Price joined the mission at Ruk.

In 1897 Miss Jennie Olin joined the mission at Kusaie and Miss Beulah Logan went to the aid of her mother at Ruk, but Mrs. Logan was compelled by ill health to return to the United States in 1899, where she died in December of that year. In 1898 Rev. Martin L. Stimson and wife, formerly connected with the mission in Shansi, China, and Misses Elizabeth and Jane E. Baldwin, were sent as needed reinforcements to the mission at Ruk.

Great changes occurred in the Island world in connection with and subsequent to the Spanish-American war. An American vessel of war took possession of Guam, in the Mariana Islands, formerly called the Ladrones, and this place came under the dominion of the United States. In the year 1900 Mr. and Mrs. Price were transferred from Ruk and commenced a work at Guam, aided for a time by Miss Mary A. Channell, and aided later on by Mr. and Mrs. Arthur C. Logan who remained but one year. In 1905, Rev. and Mrs. H. E. B. Case were sent to Guam, where they are now doing good work. Mr. and Mrs. Price, after an absence

rendered necessary by sickness, are now at Guam, seeking to prepare the Scriptures in the Chamorro language, which is spoken at that island.

Shortly after the Spanish war the Caroline Islands were sold by Spain to Germany, the latter nation having taken possession of the Marshall group in 1885. The only American missionaries now resident on Ponape are Rev. and Mrs. Thomas Gray, who went there in 1900, laboring with great assiduity. In 1904 the German Christian Endeavor Union undertook to send out representatives from their organization to labor in co-operation with the missionaries of our Board in the German colonies, and Mr. Hugenschmidt was sent to aid Mr. Gray on Ponape. Later, two young men have been sent by the same organization, one of them to be associated with Dr. Rife within the Marshall group. These reinforcements have given great cheer to the solitary workers in Micronesia.

In April of 1905 a cyclone of extraordinary severity swept over the Caroline Group and destroyed or prostrated all trees and houses both on Kusaie and Ponape and the adjacent islands, so that the work was greatly interrupted and the attention of the missionaries was necessarily diverted to the erection of buildings and the securing of food.

At this time of writing a plan is in contemplation for changing the method of operation, establishing the training schools for

both the Marshall and Gilbert Islands, within the groups themselves, avoiding the necessity of transporting the scholars to and from Kusaie.

Mention should here be made of the establishment of missionary work on Pleasant Island, called also Nauru, by Mr. and Mrs. Delaporte in 1899. This island, though 400 miles distant from the Marshall group, is connected with it, belonging to Germany. It has become a place of much business through the finding of great quantities of phosphate and the organization of the Pacific Phosphate Company. Natives from the Gilbert group have been brought there and Chinese laborers are also to be secured to open these rich deposits. The Company is in the hands of Christian men who will be helpful to the work. Ocean Island, which is within the Gilbert group, has also similar deposits of phosphate, and will undoubtedly soon be developed by the Phosphate Company. The prospects for efficient Christian work within these groups will thereby be greatly enhanced.

MISSIONARY VESSELS. —The work in Micronesia has from the beginning been largely dependent upon the use of missionary vessels.

*The Morning Stars.* Five vessels bearing this name have done service for the American Board in Micronesia. (1) A brigantine, launched November 12, 1856, at a cost of

\$18,351. She was sold, after ten years' service, for \$5,812. (2) The second *Star* was launched September 22, 1866, costing \$23,406. She was wrecked upon the island of Kusaie, swept ashore by a current during a calm, October 18, 1869. (3) The third *Star* was a brig of 181 tons, ninety-eight feet long. She cost \$28,462, of which sum \$19,087 were received from insurance of the previous vessel. She was wrecked off the harbor of Kusaie, February 22, 1883. (4) The fourth *Star* was a barkentine of about 430 tons burden, with auxiliary steam power to be used in calms and currents. She cost, with her machinery and outfit, \$44,280, and was launched at Bath, Maine, August 6, 1884. This fourth *Star* was sold in 1901, as not serving the work efficiently, and a small schooner named *The Carrie and Annie*, served the mission temporarily. (5) *Morning Star No. 5*, was a full steamer with only auxiliary sails, to be used in case of emergency. She was a vessel of 400 tons, costing \$37,000, and bore the name of the *Sunbeam* when she was purchased. After refitting, she sailed from Boston in June of 1904, going by way of the Mediterranean and Suez Canal. She arrived at Ponape in October and at once made trips through the groups, serving the mission admirably. But it was found impossible to secure within the Caroline group, save at an extravagant cost, the coal necessary to give her motive power,

and it has been deemed necessary to dispose of her and find at less cost other means of communicating with the islands.

In the meantime, the development of the trade within these island groups has been such that lines of steamers have been established by German capitalists, making regular trips through the groups, carrying both mails and supplies to our missionaries. Small vessels, also, are now found in that region that can be chartered for temporary service, and it is believed that the work in this portion of the world can be carried on efficiently and economically through the employment of these public conveyances and aided by launches that shall serve within the different groups.

It should be said as a matter of history, that in 1892, a small vessel, with auxiliary vapor engine, was built and named the *Hiram Bingham*, and during these 14 years she has been the house and home, as well as the carriage of Mr. Walkup, the missionary, who has thus been enabled to render excellent service, visiting the various islands in the Gilbert group repeatedly.

In 1890 a small schooner of 50 tons was built at San Francisco, and was named the *Robert W. Logan*, going to Ruk, for work in that archipelago and the Mortlocks. Three years later she went to Japan for repairs and on her return voyage was lost at sea. A new vessel bearing the same name



was sent in her place, but she was wrecked within the Mortlock group in 1890. No lives were lost.

As has been intimated, changes in the conduct of this work in Micronesia are now impending, but it is not in any wise contemplated to withdraw from this missionary field. It may be that some plan for co-operating with the London Missionary Society that is now laboring in the southern portion of that group, may be formed. The help from the German Christian Endeavorers within the Marshall and Caroline groups will materially aid in evangelizing those islands. Though in a different way than formerly, it is hoped to do more rather than less, in order that these waiting islands may receive the Gospel of our Lord Jesus.



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